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ABSTRACT

This bibliography assembles a wide range of information on parental attitudes and behaviors that will help readers understand the needs of families, and especially low-income families, who use child care. Most of the books, reports, and journal articles described can be obtained from libraries. Topics addressed by these sources of information include: (1) the effects of parental employment on children; (2) resource and referral agencies; (3) parental choice of child care programs; (4) consumer issues; and (5) the special needs of low-income and welfare parents. Some of the books, reports, and articles report the results of studies and surveys of child care, and describe particular child care programs. The bibliography contains 44 titles. (BC)

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CONSUMERS AND CHILD CARE:

AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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This bibliography assembles a wide range of information and studies on parental attitudes and behaviors that will help readers understand the needs of families, especially low-income families, who use child care. Most of the books, reports, and journal articles described can be obtained from local libraries and interlibrary loan networks. Pricing and ordering information is provided. ***All documents should be ordered directly from the publisher or distributor indicated.***

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Baydar, Nazli; Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne

Effects of maternal employment and child-care arrangements on preschoolers' cognitive and behavioral outcomes: Evidence from the children of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth

This study uses NLSY (National Longitudinal Survey of Youth) 1985 data concerning 572 white children who were 3–4 years old at the 1986 data collection point for child assessments. The data used included child assessments—Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R) and the Behavior Problems Index (BPI)—and maternal employment and child care arrangements during the child's first three years. The authors studied the effects of four variables on child outcomes: the year the mother entered the labor force; the timing of labor force entry within the first year; the continuity and intensity of employment; and the child care arrangements used.

Timing within the first three years. The authors concluded that maternal employment begun in the first year after birth had detrimental effects on the children as measured by PPVT-R and BPI scores, regardless of gender or poverty status. Maternal employment begun during the second and third years had no effect on scores. Continuity of maternal employment after infancy was slightly beneficial when compared to intermittent employment.

Timing within the first year. A mother's entry into the labor force in the fourth quarter of the child's first year of life, as compared to her entry in other quarters, had beneficial effects on both PPVT-R and BPI scores. Entry in the second quarter had more detrimental effects than entry in the first, as measured by the PPVT-R, and the BPI reflected equally detrimental scores for entry in all of the first three quarters.

Intensity of employment. The effects of intensity of employment (i.e., number of hours worked per week) were mixed. The least detrimental situation was when the mother worked less than ten hours per week, followed by over 20 hours per week. Working between 10 and 20 hours per week was the most detrimental. One explanation is that mothers who work more than half-time are more likely to make more stable and possibly higher quality arrangements because they know the child will spend a lot of time in care, and because the mothers may have more money to purchase care. It is also possible that these children may form healthy attachments to their caregivers as well as to their own mothers.

Child care arrangements. During a child's first year of life, grandmother care was the most prevalent type of nonmaternal care—whether the mother was employed or not. If the mother was employed, grandmother care and nonrelative care were the most prevalent and were used about equally. (In this analysis *nonrelatives* appears to include both family day care and in-home care.) During the child's second year, nonrelative care was used more often than the grandmother, but both of these types of care were far more common than any other type. During the child's third year, center-based care was more common for both employed and nonemployed mothers and was used about the same as grandmothers and nonrelatives.

Effects of child care arrangements. The authors infer that the mother was employed from her use of child care arrangements (other than maternal care during infancy). However, there are other reasons for using child care—protective or preventive services, or respite—and a small proportion of mothers do care for their children while they work. The various child care arrangements used in infancy had no statistically significant effects on later PPVT-R scores (but not BPI scores), but the interaction of the care arrangement with poverty and gender did have significant effects. Grandmother care and maternal care during infancy were slightly more beneficial for children in poverty than for those not in poverty. Center-based care and father care in infancy were detrimental for boys in poverty. Grandmother and relative care appeared to be beneficial for infant boys with employed mothers.

These conclusions are interesting and provocative. However, a large survey has limitations. Only two child outcomes were discussed, and the large sample included only white children. Some subgroup analyses were based on very small samples.

Implications for consumer education. Conclusions on the timing of maternal employment are too mixed to yield useful information for consumer education—beyond reinforcing the importance of a dependable, stable, loving caregiver in the first three months of a child's life. The apparent negative effects of center care and father care for low-income children may indicate caution, and the positive effects of grandmother care in infancy for children in poverty should be noted.

Developmental Psychology, November, 1991, 27 (6): 932–945

Bellm, Dan

Resource and referral agencies: Toward a stronger child care system

This paper offers a concise overview of the history, purpose, function, and current status of child care

resource and referral (R&R) agencies in the United States. The author describes R&Rs as community-based organizations with four basic functions: (1) promoting consumer education and parental choice; (2) assisting child care providers; (3) documenting trends and building the supply of child care; and (4) leveraging resources through public/private partnerships. R&Rs help parents become well-educated, quality-conscious consumers aware of options. R&Rs have databases of child care program information that include not only data such as location, ages of children served, and fees, but also information on vacancies and program aspects that may be important to parents—such as child care philosophy. R&Rs refer parents to those programs that meet the consumers' expressed needs and, if none are available, can help parents construct alternatives such as combining part-day programs or sharing care with another family. They also help parents learn how to apply for public and other subsidies.

National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA). 2116 Campus Drive, S.E., Rochester, MN 55904; (507) 287-2220. (1990, 6 pp.; $5.00 members, $15.00 others; prepaid orders only)

Berezin, Judy, with the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies in cooperation with Child Care, Inc.

The complete guide to choosing child care

This guide, written for moderate- to upper-income parents, covers all forms of child care and contains good directories of helpful local organizations. Child care choice is presented as a process of understanding both the practical needs of the adults (e.g., hours, location, what one can afford to pay), the developmental or individual needs of the child, and then examining the available options.

Forms of care are described accurately (e.g., nursery school/prekindergarten is presented as a form of center care), and care is seen as inseparable from education. Relative care is discussed very briefly. The editor assumes that most parents have to look outside the home and family for child care. In-home care (nonrelative, nanny-type) is covered in depth, along with centers and family day care. The author discusses the cost of each form of care, but there is no information on how to pay for care, except for a brief mention of the dependent care tax credit and the possibility of employer subsidies. This book is good, but it is probably not designed for low-income parents as it does not discuss relative care or public subsidies. The guide would be useful to trainers designing consumer education workshops.

Random House, Mail Service Department 26-2, 201 E. 50th Street, New York, NY 10022; (800) 733-3000. (1991, 258 pp.; $12.95 plus postage and handling)

Berkeley Planning Associates

The role of child care resource and referral agencies in the implementation of Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN): A report to the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network

This report describes the results of the 1989–1990 survey of child care resource and referral agency participation in GAIN, and it makes comparisons to a similar survey conducted in 1987–1988. (GAIN is a California welfare reform program for AFDC recipients which mandates job training and basic education and offers child care—all designed to help mothers move off welfare.) More than half of all R&Rs in California have contracts with their county social service office to provide services to GAIN clients and GAIN child care providers. Another quarter of R&Rs serving GAIN clients do so without signing a contract with their local social service office.

In 1989–1990 R&Rs were providing on average somewhat fewer services than they were in 1987–1988. R&Rs decreased their GAIN-related child care resource development activities (such as recruitment and training) partly because federal regulations do not allow funds to be spent on these activities. County social service offices had begun to conduct more child care support activities themselves, such as child care orientations and payment of providers. On the whole R&Rs reported having good working relationships with county social service offices.

In the 1989–1990 survey R&Rs noted a variety of problems that GAIN clients have getting child care—including lack of transportation and the difficulty of matching child care program hours to their work/training schedules. Many R&Rs expressed concern about the low quality of child care and of the case management services received by GAIN clients.

Many R&Rs saw as a problem the greater-than-expected use of "exempt" child care by GAIN clients. ("Exempt" care includes types of care exempt from state regulations because the provider is either a relative or cares for very few children.) Some R&Rs believe the county social service office explicitly steers parents toward this type of care because it is cheaper. Others believe that the lack of information about options encourages GAIN clients to use exempt care. Some feel that the promotion of exempt care undermines the rest of the child care system. Other R&Rs have sought new ways to work with exempt providers; the number of R&Rs

providing services to them increased during 1988–1990. Although R&Rs traditionally have not had a relationship with exempt providers, the trend in federal funding has been to include them in subsidy programs—a process that will increase their use by eligible families.

California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, 111 New Montgomery St., 7th floor, San Francisco, CA 94105; (415) 882-0234. (1990, 49 pp.; $5.00 plus $3.50 postage and handling, plus appropriate sales tax for CA residents)

Bogat, G. Anne; Gensheimer, Leah K.

Discrepancies between the attitudes and actions of parents choosing day care

This article concerns a study of 167 parents who telephoned into a day care information and referral service in Michigan seeking either center- or home-based child care. (Parents who called to seek in-home care were excluded from the study.) All callers received the R&R agency's 15-page handbook, which included a 45-item checklist for evaluating child care programs. The majority of callers were white (84 percent), highly educated (53 percent college graduates, and only 4 percent not high school graduates), married women (77 percent) in their late 30s (95 percent) who were currently using or had previously used child care (67 percent). Information on family income was not collected.

Parents rated the importance of ten features in choosing child care. The percentages of parents who rated the features as being either important or extremely important appear below :

Health and safety— *99 percent*
How children get along with each other and the adults— *95 percent*
Provider's child-rearing philosophy— *93 percent*
Coordination between the home and the provider— *89 percent*
Physical space and surroundings— *87 percent*
Materials, equipment, and activities— *85 percent*
Distance from home— *80 percent*
Cost— *72 percent*
Distance from work— *64 percent*
Recommendations of other people — *59 percent*

When asked which factor was the most important—out of the ten factors above plus 14 others cited by parents, the greatest percentage of parents indicated the personality of the provider (19 percent). The second factor chosen was how children get along (11 percent) and convenience (10 percent).

Parents who reported that they used the child care evaluation checklist provided were more likely than nonusers to have asked the opinion of another person who used child care, to use the list of providers referred to them by the R&R, and to visit or telephone providers. Checklist users were less likely to rate cost or distance from home as important.

Only half of the parents studied actually used the checklists. Checklists that emphasize high quality may not be helpful to parents if the local market does not offer services that fit the checklist's ideal. (Perhaps a 45-item list is too long.) At the same time, the fact that half of the parents did use the checklist could be interpreted positively.

Generally, the parents in the study were quite satisfied with care, and they seemed to be most influenced by the positive qualities of the caregiver (with the personality of the caregiver being the most important factor). Parents who made extensive searches were just as satisfied with their choices as those who did not. In a tight child care market, high satisfaction might indicate satisfaction with the fact that the search is over—as much as satisfaction with the actual arrangement. These well-educated parents mentioned the caregiver's personality spontaneously. As a concept this resembles the idea of trust and avoidance of strangers (i.e., preference for relatives) that low-income parents report as important.

This type of data on parents' basic preferences and behavior is useful for developing consumer education materials and strategies that consumers will find helpful. This study suggests that consumer education materials should be concise, constructed from the parent's rather than the provider's, regulator's, or researcher's perspective, and should be relevant to the characteristics of the local child care market and to factors that satisfy parents.

Child Care Quarterly, Fall 1986, 15 (3): 159–169

Consumers Union of United States

Early childhood consumer education

This report, part of a six-part series developed by the Consumer Education Materials Project, is nearly twenty years old, but it is included here as an example of excellent consumer education material. It is directed to adults who want to help young children become educated consumers. It is a "developmentally appropriate" approach (in current parlance) to educating young children to be good consumers. It opens with child development and how young children learn, and it proceeds to case studies of exemplary consumer education efforts in parent education programs and in different early childhood settings. Each example is what is called an "integrated curriculum" today. This book is a

valuable resource as a model of consumer education and early childhood curriculum.

Out-of-print. Photocopy available for $12.90 prepaid from: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University, 154 Haven Avenue, New York, NY 10032; (212) 927-8793. (1973, 79 pp.)

Dombro, Amy Laura; Bryan, Patty

Sharing the caring: How to find the right child care and make it work for you and your child

This book, written for parents and based on extensive interviews with parents, presents the process of choosing child care and the process of making the relationship between parent and caregiver the best it can be. The section on choosing child care distinguishes between child and family needs; it includes logistical considerations and cost as a factor, and it offers sensible and thoughtful suggestions for locating, judging, and selecting child care. The authors describe the major forms of nonfamilial care in a balanced way that focuses on the child's experience and parental needs. Relative care is mentioned briefly, along with other "parent-devised arrangements," like sharing a caregiver with another family.

Most of the text focuses on the parent's making and nurturing a relationship with the child care provider—"sharing the caring," in the words of the title. Parent experiences help illustrate problems and solutions concerning roles, feelings, and communication. The process of a child's participation in child care is presented from the child's and the parents' perspectives, interspersed with the caregiver's perspective. The book emphasizes that the so-often-overlooked relationship between the adults—parent to caregiver—is important to the child's success. The words and feelings of parents reflect their adjustments to major changes in family life and child-rearing practice.

Simon and Schuster c/o Prentice Hall, 200 Old Tappan Road, Old Tappan, NJ 07675; (201) 767-5937. (1991, 159 pp.; $9.99 plus $4.00 postage and handling)

Frank, Mary; Caldwell, Bettye

Marketing child care programs: Why and how

This book, originally published as a special issue of the *Journal of Children in Contemporary Society*, describes marketing principles and strategy as they relate to early childhood programs; thoughtfully discusses the reasons for negative public and professional opinions of child care; and addresses why and how marketing strategies can help change negative attitudes. Case studies portray four different types of child care programs that have successfully used marketing principles to create a marketing plan. Although the volume concentrates on center-based programs, the marketing principles apply to any form of child care and can also help shape mass public or consumer education campaigns.

Haworth Press, 10 Alice Street, Binghamton, NY 13904; (800) 342-9678. (1985, 107 pp.; $29.95 plus $2.75 postage and handling)

Fuqua, Robert W.; Labensohn, Dorothy

Parents as consumers of child care

In a study of 540 parents of children from birth through age twelve who were using licensed or registered child care arrangements in a midwestern state, the authors examined parents' selection of child care, usage, and satisfaction.

Search. Confirming findings from earlier studies, the parents turned primarily to friends for information in their search for child care (77 percent). Newspaper advertisements and the telephone book were consulted by 43 percent, while 11 percent used R&R agencies. Eighty percent of the parents visited child care sites during their search, with about half visiting one site and one-third visiting two or three sites.

Problems. About one-third of the parents reported that child care arrangements were difficult because of parental work patterns (e.g., working irregular hours, nighttime, or weekend). Other problems included the need for sick child care, difficulty finding care for infants or school-aged children, the costs of care, and the search for one site appropriate for all children in the family.

Satisfaction. About half of the parents (56 percent of the family day care users and 44 percent of the center users) indicated that they would choose some other child care arrangement if it were available. Parents believed they were well prepared personally to select child care; but 72 percent thought most parents were not.

The authors assert that parents generally are not well-prepared to be consumers of child care because the need for child care has grown so quickly and is in conflict with slowly changing societal and parental expectations about child-rearing.

Family Relations, April 1986, 35 (2): 295–303

Fuqua, Robert W.; Schieck, Roberta

Child care resource and referral programs and parents' search for quality child care

The consumer behaviors of more than 100 parents using family day care were compared. Half had used

an R&R agency and half had not. Families were similar in terms of marital status, income, and education; the majority were in their 20s, had a college education, and earned an annual family income of over $25,000. The only demographic difference was that R&R users had younger children (average age 2-1/2 years—versus 4 years for nonusers) who had been in care for longer periods of time. This difference might indicate that the parents using agencies were more motivated to seek help because of the younger age of their children. Care for younger children is less available and more problematic for parents to arrange because infants are more vulnerable and dependent than older children.

Other factors examined were sources of child care information, search strategies, selection processes, and satisfaction with present child care. R&R users visited more homes and spent more time on their searches. Half the non-R&R users visited two or more homes; more than 90 percent of the R&R users made two or more visits; and all R&R users spent at least three hours looking. Both groups used informal information sources similarly (e.g., friends, relatives, co-workers). The only difference in information sources was that R&R users relied more on formal sources, such as books, brochures, and lists of providers. Both groups felt well-prepared to select child care, and they both reported high levels of satisfaction with the arrangements they chose. Even so, the same proportion of both groups (just over 60 percent) indicated that they would choose a different child care setting if all options were available. Both groups rated the same aspects of child care as important: parent-provider relations, caregiver competence, and logistics.

As reported in other studies, there is an apparent contradiction between these parents' high levels of satisfaction with current care and their preference for choosing different care. The explanation offered here for this difference was that the parents may have felt they had done the best they could in a limited market, and they probably needed to believe that their child was in a good situation. The apparent lack of R&R influence was explained two ways. First, R&Rs may be more helpful to less well-educated families with fewer resources than to the parents in this study. Second, since all of these parents were family day care users, it may be that parents feel more qualified to evaluate family day care homes without R&R assistance than they feel in assessing more formal settings such as centers.

Early Childhood Research Quarterly, September 1989, 4 (3): 357–365

Harris, Lou, and Associates

The Philip Morris Companies Family Survey II: Child care

This report summarizes the results of a nationally representative telephone survey of public opinion about the state of children, about existing child care systems, and about the need for action. The sample was evenly divided between the parents of children under six and other people, including nonparents and parents of older children. Child care arrangements concerned children under six. Very few of the reported items were differentiated by family income levels.

Relevant findings included the following:

- The average parent reported using between two and three care arrangements during work hours.
- When asked what type of care they would like to choose for their children under six, 75 percent said they preferred relatives (a category including "mother at home not working"); 13 percent preferred group child care; and 12 percent preferred neighbors, sitters, or other nonrelatives.
- Parents rated ten factors as important when they sought child care outside their own home and family (i.e., in centers). The top two factors, cited by 97 percent of parents, were staff quality and reliability; 94 percent cited the center's effect on their child's morale and sense of security.
- The average amount of money reportedly paid for child care was $190 per month. The cost varied with income, but this was not a simple relationship:

Annual income	*Cost per month*
Under $7,500	$194
$7,500–$15,000	$154
$15,000–$25,000	$179
$25,000–$35,000	$151
$35,000–$50,000	$174
Over $50,000	$332

- Overall, parents were not at all satisfied with the child care system. Only 8 percent of all parents felt it was working very well.
- When parents were asked if their co-workers would view them as "not able to cope" if it were known that they needed help with child care, only 12 percent of all parents said yes. The more vulnerable workers were more likely to be concerned: 18 percent of those parents with incomes under $7,500; 20 percent of Hispanic parents; and 24 percent of black parents. When asked the same question about parental leave, 25 percent of all parents said yes. The concern was higher among those with incomes under $7,500 (33 percent), among black parents (32 percent), and Hispanic parents (31 percent). One-third of all parents

believed that their chances for raises and promotions were affected negatively by their child care problems (e.g., having to miss work or refuse overtime), rising to 38 percent of Hispanic parents, and to 47 percent of low-income parents.
- 96 percent of the public (parents and nonparents) agreed that "parents should be able to choose among several options to decide *which* child care program is best suited for their children."
- 70 percent of the public disagreed with the statement, "with some initiative, most parents can find relatives or friends who can care for their children while they are at work, making child care facilities largely unnecessary."

Philip Morris Companies, Inc., Media Relations, 120 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017; (212) 878-2754. (1989, 24 pp.; free)

Hofferth, Sandra L.; Wissoker, Douglas

Price, quality, and income in child care choice

Data analyzed were from the 1985 NLSY (National Longitudinal Survey of Youth) on mothers 20–27 with children under age six. Child care was divided into *market* care (i.e., outside the family: centers, family day care, and sitters) and *nonmarket* care (i.e., within the family: the father or other relative, whether in the child's home or not). The authors discussed use of relatives, noting some evidence that care by a relative may be associated with better developmental outcomes than care by a "stranger." (See Baydar and Brooks-Gunn above).

Child care decisions were related to the price and quality of care and to the family's own resources and needs. Parents tried to minimize price and to maximize quality (defined as the staff/child ratio reported by the mothers) within the limits of their income and resources. The consumers reported the cost of child care, taking into account the factors used by providers in adjusting fees (such as family size and income). Total family income affected how much a family could pay—but not which mode of care was chosen. The mother's income did affect the mode chosen: the higher her income the more likely the family was to use a center and the less likely to rely on care by the husband.

Measuring the quality of care by the staff-child ratio was useful for care provided by relatives and centers, because parents were less likely to choose arrangements with unfavorable ratios. This approach did not work for family day care; there may not be enough variation in ratios in that type of setting, or this ratio may not be a good measure of quality differences in family day care. In the theoretical model on which this study is based, "(e)ach family is assumed to know which child care modes are available and the expected price and quality of those modes." This assumption may or may not be true. If better consumer education were available, the link between income and choice of higher quality care might be even stronger.

The Urban Institute, Department C, Research Papers Sales Office, P. O. Box 7273, Washington, DC 20044; (202) 857-8687. Revised version of paper presented at the annual meeting of the Population Association of America, Toronto, Canada, May 3–5, 1990. (1991, 64 pp.; $9.00 including postage and handling)

Howes, Carollee; Olenick, Michael

Family and child care influences on toddlers' compliance

This study investigated the influences of different family dynamics and the varying quality of child care on an aspect of child development—toddlers' compliance and self-regulation. Eighty-nine families with a child 18–36 months (evenly divided between boys and girls) participated.

Roughly equal numbers of families used high-quality child care centers, low-quality centers, or no center. Center quality was defined by staff/child ratio, staff training, and turnover. High quality was having: a ratio of 1:4 for toddlers, caregivers who were trained in child development, and a turnover of no more than two primary teachers within the year. Low quality was higher ratios, no trained caregivers available, and a high turnover rate—more than two primary caregivers in one year.

No demographic differences existed among the three groups of families (concerning race, ethnicity, child's age, child's gender, family structure, mother's and father's education, occupation, or age). However, data on family income were not obtained. Family patterns recorded included the amount of the father's involvement with the child per week, the strength of the family's social support network, the mother's satisfaction with her role, the amount of child care used per week, and the complexity of the family's situation. (Complexity in this sense referred to the parent(s) being apart from the child. Perhaps one parent was not living with the child, or either parent was working nights, weekends, or erratic hours, or traveling overnight regularly.) Toddler compliance and self-regulation were observed in the centers, in each child's home, and in the laboratory.

This study found that child care quality and family patterns interacted and that both influenced the toddler's social development. Families using low-quality centers were less involved with their

children and less invested in their child's compliance compared to other parents, and these families led more complex lives than other families. Teachers in low-quality centers were also less involved and less invested in compliance. These children were less compliant and less able to self-regulate than other children. The effects of low-quality care appeared to be stronger for boys than for girls.

In contrast, the parents of children in high-quality centers were more involved and more invested in compliance than the parents using low-quality centers. Teachers in high-quality centers were also more involved and invested in compliance than the teachers in low-quality centers. The children in these centers were found to be more compliant and more likely to self-regulate than children in low-quality centers.

The combination of a stressful family life and low-quality child care appeared to affect a toddler's social development negatively. Both the complexity of family life *and* the quality of child care can contribute to this. The fact that family complexity and low-quality care were found together did not necessarily mean that stressed parents were purposely choosing low-quality care. The findings show clear relationships among child well-being and family well-being and aspects of child care.

Child Development, 1986, 57 (1): 202–216

Institute for Applied Research

Child care and AFDC recipients in Illinois: Patterns, problems and needs

This thoughtful and well-written report presents the results of a comprehensive Illinois statewide study of the child care needs and experiences of single-parent AFDC families with children under age 14. The study consisted of a mail survey of more than 7,000 AFDC recipients with over 100 in-depth, face-to-face follow-up interviews; 15 focus group discussions with parents; a mail survey of over 1,000 child care providers of all types located in low-income areas; and interviews with over 50 other key informants. The report presents in a balanced way the perspectives of the parents, the providers of child care, and the public systems, which lead to a sharper analysis of the issues and to clearer, more practical recommendations than are usually found in such reports.

Use. Only about one-fifth of the sample were using child care at the time of the survey. Some of these families (21 percent) used more than one kind of care, either for different children or for one child. Rather than reporting on only the *primary* child care arrangement (as most surveys do), the authors describe all arrangements in detail, creating a more accurate picture of child care usage patterns. Most families used informal care provided by relatives and friends. About one-third used their own home, about one-quarter a relative's home, and about one-third a nonrelative's home. Only 20 percent used centers, and very few families used licensed family day care providers. Friends provided some of the in-home care and most of the nonrelative home care.

Preferences and constraints. The authors present the factors that influenced the kind of care used in a particularly helpful way. Some factors were under the parent's control (e.g., values, hopes and concerns). More than half the parents preferred formal center-based care. Most parents were concerned about quality, which they viewed as a combination of attentive nurturing and education. Other factors beyond their control worked to constrain their choices. These included cost, availability, and access. Additional constraints were the nature of low-paying work and the characteristics of child care subsidy systems. These parents used informal care largely because of the child care "disregard" payment system that forced them to pay for child care first and then wait for reimbursement. (Friends and relatives were much more likely to wait to be paid than a formal program.) Those AFDC parents with access to subsidy programs that made direct payments to providers were more likely to use centers. As the authors state: "The distribution of types of child care selected by individuals participating in the child care subsidy programs more closely resembles the distribution of child care preferences."

Child care providers. Although nearly all the child care providers interviewed did accept and serve subsidized children, they also experienced problems with the subsidy system. Chiefly they said that state rates did not meet their costs for providing care.

Supply. One of the most revealing findings in this report was the dramatic difference between high-income and low-income neighborhoods in the supply of formal child care. Comparing the number of children under age 10 to the number of places in licensed child care is a measure of supply. In high-income areas there were 10 children per licensed place, while in low-income areas there were 16 children per place. The ratio was even more severe in poor, inner-city neighborhoods: 18 to 1. This was clear evidence of the lack of a supply of formal child care available to low-income families.

Child care and school and work. For a single mother to work her way off welfare, she requires both child care and further education and access to a better-paying job that is full-time—instead of the typical part-time low-wage job generally held by the

women in this study. Child care problems interfere with the educational and vocational aspirations of welfare mothers. This study found that 42 percent of teenage mothers had dropped out of school within the previous year due to child care problems, and 42 percent of part-time working parents were prevented from working full-time because of child care problems. Most disturbing, 20 percent of the working parents who had left AFDC the previous year had to return to AFDC because of child care problems.

Conclusions. Most of the conclusions offered may be equally applicable to many other states. Since many low-income parents prefer centers and desire educational environments for their young children, and it is known that early education benefits low-income children, the authors recommend increasing the supply of high quality child care for low-income families, such as promoting collaborations to create full-day care between community-based child care and Head Start programs, and similarly between child care and school-based early education programs.

Another recommendation with broad application concerns parents' knowledge of child care and caseworker responsibilities. Many AFDC mothers did not know they were eligible for subsidy programs, or they did not remember being told about them, or they were confused about how to get them. The authors state: "It is imperative that local DPA caseworkers have a comprehensive understanding of all child care subsidy programs [and] essential that caseworkers have an incentive for providing child care related information to clients including an explanation of how to access child care resource and referral services. The only meaningful way to do this is to include the sharing of child care information in the evaluation of caseworker performance."

Perhaps the most significant—and cautionary—conclusion concerns the relationship of child care to other needs of AFDC parents. The authors state: "The potential of child care programs, single-handedly, to help individuals to lift themselves out of situations of dependence on public aid and into lives of self-reliance on a permanent basis is minimal. . . Unless child care programs are viewed as part of a broader set of social programs—of education, training, employment, assistance, housing, and other supports—they cannot be expected to accomplish much. But neither can education and training. Each is an essential part of a support package that must be melded together into a coordinated system to accomplish the goal of each individually."

Illinois Department of Public Aid, Child Care and Development Section, 624 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605; (312) 793-3610. Attention: Michele Piel. (1991, 146 pp.; free). Also available: *Digest of findings and conclusions* (36 pp.; free)

Kerachsky, Stuart

Implementing the child care assistance provided under the Family Support Act
In Rebecca Maynard, Ellen Eliason Kisker, and Stuart Kerachsky, *Child Care Challenges for Low-Income Families, The Minority Female Single Parent Demonstration*

This chapter discusses Family Support Act (FSA) subsidized child care from two perspectives: promoting parental employment and healthy child development. Continuity of care benefits the child and decreases the complexity of the adult's participation. For example, child care arrangements should be maintained through brief lapses in adult's participation, and child care arrangements should meet the changing requirements of both adult and child. The costs of these additional amounts of child care time can be covered with non-FSA funds during non-JOBS-eligible periods—or by redefining the scope of employment and training to include all employment-directed activities, thus making these periods eligible for FSA funds.

The report suggests that child care needs should be "dealt with naturally and conveniently in conjunction with all other aspects of job preparation," in a one-stop-shopping approach. R&R agencies can respond effectively to parents' child care needs and concerns; and they can devote full attention to this issue rather than treat it as one of many aspects of JOBS. To be most effective, child care selection is not a one-time event; it requires ongoing attention. Child care needs change with the age of the child, dissatisfaction, and other issues. R&Rs should work alongside JOBS staff. Assistance to low-income families in choosing and paying for child care should be available continuously, not only when requested or only at mandated points (initially and at transition from AFDC because of earned income). Subsidy mechanisms, such as vouchers, would permit the greatest access and flexibility, although some reserved-place contracting would contribute to market stability.

The author urges that FSA child care policy be considered in the larger context of a state's child care system—so that long-term continuity can be assured for both parent and child and so that the goal of decreasing welfare dependency can be met.

Rockefeller Foundation, 1133 Sixth Avenue, New York, NY 10036; (212) 852-8355. Attention: Julie Bauer. (1990, Briefing Paper J03, pp. 33–42; free)

Kisker, Ellen Eliason; Silverberg, Marsha; Maynard, Rebecca

Early impacts of the Teenage Parent Demonstration on child care needs and utilization

Teenage mothers receiving AFDC, who took part in two demonstration programs in New Jersey and Illinois aimed at reducing long-term welfare dependence among teenagers, were the study subjects. Types of child care used by the "active" participants—who were employed, in school, or in job training—were relative care (69 percent), nonrelative care (20 percent), and center care (11 percent). In comparison, other local mothers engaged in similar activities used relative care (54 percent), nonrelative care (26 percent), and center care (20 percent).

Fewer teenage mothers than other mothers considered alternatives to relative care. Reasons given were that care was difficult to find, expensive, and that financial assistance was not available. The most frequent barrier was the "belief that a stranger could not be trusted to care for their children because their children were young and would be unable to report abusive behavior by the caregiver."

Dissatisfaction with care was recorded as the percentage of mothers preferring a different arrangement from the current one. Teenage mothers were more dissatisfied than older local mothers (40 percent vs. 28 percent). Teenage mothers who were "active" participants were more concerned about the quality of child care than other teenage mothers who were concerned only about cost and availability.

Mathematica Policy Research, P. O. Box 2393, Princeton, NJ 08543-2329; (609) 799-3535. Attention: Jan Watterworth. (1990, Report No. PR 90-66, 78 pp.; $6.00 plus $2.50 postage and handling)

Kontos, Susan; Dunn, Loraine

Attitudes of caregivers, maternal experiences with day care, and children's development

It is generally accepted that providers of child care are judgmental in their rating of parents' child-rearing abilities. Previous studies appear to support the notion that caregivers' perceptions of parents are related to the families' socioeconomic status rather than to the actual behavior of the child or the parent. Those parents judged to be "poor parents" tend to be less educated and have lower incomes.

This study, however, involving 100 mothers and children from ten day care centers representative of a western Pennsylvania community, found no socioeconomic differences among groups of mothers rated by their children's caregivers as good, adequate, or poor parents. Rather, mothers considered to be "poor parents" were more likely to be divorced, less likely to communicate well with the caregivers, less likely to believe that the center was familiar with their whole family (as compared to being familiar with just the child in care), and more likely to value conformity in their children. Their children did not fare as well developmentally in measures of cognitive, social, and language development. Mothers rated as "good parents" were much more likely to communicate well with the caregivers and to believe that the center was familiar with their whole family, not just focused on the child.

All mothers reported having similar numbers of available social supports, although the type of support differed. "Good" parents named the spouse or their own parents; "poor" parents named organizations and neighbors. No mother mentioned day care staff as people who could offer help, encouragement, or support when needed. While mothers experienced very different degrees of communication and support from the center, all parents felt that the amounts of communication and support they received were appropriate.

The study indicates that parents do differ in child-rearing behavior (and their children differ developmentally as well), and caregivers perceive these differences. The differences also influence caregiver perceptions of parents. Parents and caregivers have different expectations about communications and the support functions of child care. Caregivers need to recognize that different parents desire different communication levels. (Apparently no parents expect day care staff to offer them social support.)

Descriptions of child care quality typically include extensive parent involvement as a constant—although involvement can be expected to vary with each family's needs. The way parent involvement appears in definitions of quality child care, in terms of consumer education, may require review.

Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 1989, 10 (1): 37–51

Lein, Laura

Parental evaluation of child care alternatives

The author analyses the preferences, concerns, and beliefs that influence parents' selection of child care through parents' expressed opinions of what is best for their children. Data were collected in interviews and observations with 25 broadly middle-income, two-parent, dual-worker families who had at least one preschool child.

Cost. Only half of the families paid for any of the child care they used regularly. Payers perceived few

differences between the costs of different forms of care. (Lein asserts that the issue of cost was whether to pay rather than how much.)

Use. Half of the families used multiple care arrangements—including all forms of care from relatives to baby-sitters to nursery schools and day care centers. Ten families split child care between the two parents by arranging non-overlapping work schedules.

Selection criteria. Parents used many child-rearing criteria to select and create these arrangements:

1. *Reliability.* Parents wanted the care provider to be dependable and the arrangement to be regular rather than haphazard or hastily arranged. The latter would create stress for parent and child.
2. *Continuity.* The child's day or week should not be split up too much.
3. *Cognitive development.* Here parents were divided between those who favored "learning"—which they described as sitting down and doing something, and which they associated with nursery school, not day care—and those who felt that mandatory school would come all too soon in their child's life and that time to play and enjoy themselves was more important.
4. *Physical safety and well-being.* Although families differed in their definitions, adequate supervision by adults was highly valued. Other aspects desired by parents seemed to be based on their own experiences: a fire fighter wanted a caregiver to have organized fire drills, and a mother who had been in a car accident wanted her child to be far from busy traffic.
5. *Protection from alien values.* Parents wanted care settings that reinforced their own values. Many wanted to keep their children away from values that were different.
6. *Warmth and love.* Emotional warmth from the caregiver and a clear love for children were highly valued. Some parents believed they could find this only with a close relative.
7. *Discipline and control.* Parents want caregivers who share their definition of and concern for children's good behavior.

The process of evaluating alternatives and making decisions about child care emerged as complex. It took into account child-rearing criteria along with other issues such as financial cost, convenience, proximity of relatives, and the family's income (i.e., as a trade-off between gaining more income but having to deal with the complexity and cost of child care). Because of the number of criteria and the complexity and conflict among them, all families had to engage in an implicit cost-benefit analysis. Some families used rather inconvenient or costly child care alternatives in order to maximize the criteria they considered most important for their child, or they did not consider some alternatives appealing at all.

Child care choices that respond to parental preferences require a variety of formal and informal child care facilities and services. In the context of this study the author argues that support of choice also means support of parents who want to spend more, not less, time with their children.

Urban and Social Change Review, 1979, 12 (1): 11–16

Marshall, Nancy L.

Empowering low-income parents: The role of child care

This paper reports on an evaluation of the degree to which Washington-Beech Community Preschool (WBCP), a well-designed child care center in a Boston housing project with a strong parent involvement component, empowered the tenant parents. Parents with children in this center were compared to parents whose children were in other child care arrangements and parents whose children attended no programs. The author concludes that participation in WBCP contributed to parents' feelings of individual empowerment and to increased beliefs in collective action. Parents using the center reported feeling less isolated and more able to get things they needed than other parents. WBCP parents expressed higher levels of pleasure than other parents in regard to parenting.

Parental satisfaction. The approximate breakdown of the types of child care parents used was: WBCP (25 percent); other centers (25 percent); relatives (10 percent); baby-sitters/family day care (10 percent); and parental care only (30 percent). Parents worried least when their children were in the care of relatives in the child's own home; WBCP parents were somewhat less likely than parents using other centers to be worried about how their children were being treated, getting along with other children, or were being helped to learn new skills. WBCP parents were more satisfied with opportunities for learning and the way their child was treated than parents using any other form of child care; and they were more satisfied with the location of care than all parents except those using relatives.

Relative care was found to be most satisfactory in terms of location and cost. Family day care was more satisfactory than non-WBCP centers, in terms of learning, and was equal to relatives in terms of cost satisfaction. WBCP parents were much more satisfied with how much they felt they "have a say

about how the center/caregiver takes care of my child" (80 percent vs. 50 percent for other centers and family day care, and 67 percent for relatives).

This small-scale study confirmed other studies' satisfaction findings: parents prefer the location and low cost of in-home relative care, and they strongly prefer the learning opportunities that centers offer. The fact that family day care was reported here, in contrast to other studies, as a more satisfactory learning experience than most centers (other than WBCP) may reflect the poor quality of other centers in that low-income urban neighborhood.

Wellesley College, Center for Research on Women, Wellesley, MA 02181; (617) 431-1453. Attention: Nancy L. Marshall. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development. (1991, 24 pp.; xeroxing plus postage and handling)

Martinson, Karin; Riccio, James

GAIN: Child care in a welfare employment initiative

This report describes the results of a thorough and extensive examination of child care assistance offered in the GAIN program. GAIN (Greater Avenues for Independence) is a California program designed to get AFDC parents off welfare by providing job training and basic education. When this study was conducted, GAIN was mandatory for a single parent with school-aged children receiving AFDC and for the principal wage earner in two-parent AFDC families. Volunteer participants were only about 10 percent of all GAIN registrants.

Use and satisfaction. Just 29 percent of the mandatory participants, but fully 68 percent of the volunteers, used GAIN-funded child care. Only about half of the mandatory participants had children under age twelve, and most of these children attended school while the parents participated in GAIN. These parents favored using family and friends for most child care when they needed it. In contrast, the volunteers nearly always had a preschool-aged child, and 48 percent used day care centers, 25 percent used relatives, 20 percent used exempt care, and 6 percent had children in school. GAIN participants who used child care were very satisfied with their child care; 86 percent said they would choose their most recent care situation again. When asked if they would choose it again even if they could choose any type of care, 58 percent said they would choose the same arrangement. Of those preferring change, about half would have preferred a center or preschool.

Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 3 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016; (212) 532-3200. Attention: Office of Publications. (1989, full report, 109 pp., $12.00; executive summary, 27 pp., $2.50)

Maynard, Rebecca

The child care market for low-income parents

In Rebecca Maynard; Ellen Eliason Kisker; and Stuart Kerachsky, *Child Care Challenges for Low-Income Families, The Minority Female Single Parent Demonstration*

This chapter describes the child care market in low-income communities based on data from the Teenage Parent Demonstrations in Chicago, Camden, and Newark. Low-income in this study was defined as an annual family income less than $24,000. The market in these communities mirrors the rest of the nation in terms of diversity of provider types and quality levels. Using a framework of "within family" and "within community" child care to view low-income children whose mothers work or attend school or training, the researchers found that 52 percent were cared for within the family (19 percent by their own mothers or fathers, and 33 percent by other relatives). The remaining 48 percent were in centers (21 percent) or nonrelative family day care (27 percent).

These urban centers were operating near capacity (92 percent), although only 15 percent of capacity was earmarked for infants. Centers were reliable and open year-round, but they did not offer extended hours, evening, or weekend care. Family day care was underutilized (i.e., providers reported being willing to double their capacity), and even fewer spaces were allotted for infants (5 percent). One-third of these providers offered only part-time care, and they were often unavailable due to their own illness—even though they were willing to care for sick children; 90 percent were not regulated.

Cost. Costs of care were similar to national figures (about $50–60 a week on average for full-time care, with infant care substantially higher). The cost of care was only slightly lower for low-income families than for all families, meaning that low-income families spent a greater share of family income on child care (20 percent) than did all families (11 percent).

Satisfaction. The majority of all mothers reported that they were satisfied with child care; however, 34 percent of low-income mothers compared with 29 percent of all mothers said that they preferred a different form of care from what they were using. The major reason cited for wanting a change was that the "child will learn more" (50 percent of low-income mothers, and 48 percent of all mothers).

All other reasons (i.e., hours, cost, location, quality, reliability, preferring relatives) were cited by fewer than 10 percent of the respondents. Most wanted to change to centers, with low-income parents having a stronger preference for centers than others.

Selection behavior. Most parents found child care through recommendations of friends and relatives. Only about half "shopped" by visiting more than one provider before choosing. The reasons parents reported for choosing specific care situations were quality (low-income: 37 percent; all: 36 percent), location (26 percent; 23 percent), cost (19 percent; 20 percent), and availability (17 percent; 14 percent).

Rockefeller Foundation, 1133 Sixth Avenue, New York, NY 10036; (212) 852-8355. Attention: Julie Bauer. (1990, Briefing Paper J03, pp. 9–21; free)

McGroder, Sharon M.

A synthesis of research on child care utilization patterns

The author has developed a conceptual model of "choice of care" that presents choice as the result of a two-stage parental decision-making process that assesses preferences for care (e.g., type of care and hours needed) and then reviews the "obtainable options" given family budget constraints. The type of care preferred is related to the age of the child. The hours needed reflect the presence of other adults in the home who can provide care. "Out-of-home" options are pursued for hours not covered by the family. Constraints include the costs of available care and the family's ability to pay.

Whether the mother works full- or part-time influences the choice of care. Full-time workers tend to have children in center care (30 percent) or family day care (27 percent). Part-time workers more often use the other parent (36 percent), or another relative (27 percent), or an in-home sitter (7 percent). In other words, 70 percent of care for part-time workers is family-related, and only 43 percent of care for full-time workers is family-related.

The author notes that among poor women, 75 percent of part-time workers use family-related care whether or not their spouse is present. This is similar to poor full-time workers with a spouse present. Poor single mothers are different: 56 percent use family-related care; 26 percent use family day care; and 16 percent use centers.

U. S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Planning and Evaluation, Room 410E, Hubert Humphrey Building, 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20201; (202) 245-1805. Attention: April Coley. (1988, 44 pp.; free)

Modigliani, Kathy

Choosing family child care: A handbook for parents

This guide was designed for parents who prefer family child care. Even so, it offers a complete and thorough discussion of the issues involved in the decision-making process relative to any form of child care. The child care described is high quality, which is not actually available everywhere. The author describes parental needs and child needs as intertwined in the decision process. Respect for the family child care provider is evident, with common provider practices described. For example, some providers do not want to state their fees over the telephone; they prefer a visit for the discussion of fees. A suggested checklist for parents is short, simple, and useful.

The text is in fairly simple language, but some of the assumptions may be unrealistic. To assume that a parent will engage in an extensive search over several weeks, making 1–2 hour visits to a number of homes, may not be practical. (The author suggests that "it is worth making sacrifices in other areas of your life for a few years so that you can invest in the best child care you can find.")

This is an excellent and thorough guide for highly motivated middle- and upper-income parents. Its usefulness for low-income parents would be increased if it were introduced in a workshop or an individual face-to-face consultation on child care selection, during which the contents could be modified and expanded on as needed.

National Council of Jewish Women, Center for the Child, 53 West 23rd Street, New York, NY 10010; (212) 645-4048. Attention: Nicole Lamb. (1990, 20 pp.; $3.00)

Molnar, Janice

Choosing a child care arrangement: Reasons "why"

In this study, 53 mothers with preschool children enrolled in full-time child care in Ithaca, New York, were interviewed about their child care arrangements (e.g., history, selection, likes, dislikes, benefits to their child), and they filled out a checklist on their reasons for choosing care. Half (26) were using day care centers, and half (27) were using family day care. Families in each group were divided equally between one-parent and two-parent families.

The reasons for choosing care were associated with the type of care used and with family structure. Center users strongly desired a learning experience for their children within an overall activity program.

Family day care users valued the qualities of the caregiver, convenience, and the home-like setting. They wanted their child to feel loved and to have daily contact with a caregiver. Cost of care and social interaction were more important to single-parent than two-parent families, but cost was not related to the type of care chosen. The sex of the child had no effect on choice. When asked what they liked best, family day care users focused on the caregiver (warmth and discipline); center users noted the activities, learning, and the program as a whole. Family day care users appeared to choose a substitute for home (or a "mother substitute"); center users chose a learning environment.

Choice of care was linked to the mother's attitudes, especially attitudes about work. Asked what they liked least about their child care arrangement, family day care users were much more likely to say "having to work at all" or to express feelings of guilt about working. Center users did not express these feelings.

This study highlights the fact that a mother's attitudes toward work are related to child care choice. Moreover, parents emphasize different values when choosing care. A preference for a home-like place with a warm, communicative caregiver, is as significant as a preference for a setting that emphasizes learning. The author points out that the respondents might differ less if all child care arrangements offered both more nurturing *and* more learning. If that were true, a larger number of desirable choices would be available to consumers.

Photocopy available for $6.40 prepaid from: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University, 154 Haven Avenue, New York, NY 10032; (212) 927-8793. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1982, 14 pp.)

Morgan, Gwen G.

A hitchhiker's guide to the child care universe

This paper provides an excellent introduction to the child care world, which is described as having two branches: care provided within the family (by parents or other relatives of the child either in the child's home or the relative's home) and within the community child care market (family day care, in-home care by nonrelatives, and care in centers of all types). The phrase "early care and education programs" is used to emphasize the connection between care and education.

The author states that care within the family is chosen because it is more trusted, not because it is less expensive than community care. She points out that family day care regulation policy, in trying to avoid intrusive regulation of "within family" care, becomes complicated when it "exempts" relatives who care for children in the relative's home—since some of these caretakers also care for another unrelated child and should be considered true family day care providers.

Census Bureau data on care arrangements for 1984–1985 and 1987 are used to compare care arranged "within family resources" and "using community resources." The 1987 data, differentiated by family income levels, show that the proportion of care "within family resources" declines as income rises. For incomes under $30,000, family care accounts for 54–55 percent of all care; for incomes $30,000–45,000, family care falls to 40 percent. For incomes over $45,000, family care drops to 33 percent.

In discussing elements of quality in early care and education programs, the author includes parent choice as an aspect of quality, citing Jerome Kagan's work on parent's desire to feel they can control the services they use. The importance of promoting program continuity for a child is stressed, as well as the need to support parents' pursuit of economic opportunity. Parents need to move out of poverty—not to be locked into it in order to receive the services they need for themselves and their children.

National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA), 2116 Campus Drive S.E., Rochester, MN 55904; (507) 287-2220. (1992, 63 pp.; $8.00 postage and handling included; prepaid orders only)

New York State Child Care Coordinating Council

Service to low-income families: The role of a child care resource and referral agency

In 1987 the New York state legislature allocated modest public funds to support child care resource and referral agencies across the state. Many R&Rs had been serving low-income families for many years, but these public funds *required* R&Rs to assist parents of all income levels. This report describes R&R activities in support of low-income families.

Wherever possible, R&Rs refer low-income families to child care providers and counsel them about subsidies. However, since many county social service offices do not allow low-income families to choose their child care providers, R&Rs in these counties are unable to play a referral role. Examples of other R&R activities are: encouraging providers to serve subsidized children; starting new programs and recruiting family day care providers in low-income neighborhoods and in housing projects; and coordinating services with Head Start.

New York State Child Care Coordinating Council, 237 Bradford Street, Albany, NY 12206; (518) 463-8663. (1990, 18 pp.; $3.00 members, $6.00 nonmembers, plus $2.00 postage and handling)

New York State Education Department

A parents guide to early childhood education programs in New York State

This pamphlet is one example of a consumer education document prepared by a state department of education. It offers a broad view of early childhood education (e.g., describing nursery school as child care and referring to day care, including family day care, as one of a wide range of educational opportunities). It presents a balanced picture of all the types of programs potentially available in the state with information on fees, age eligibility, and profit/nonprofit status. One page poses two questions: What do you need? What does your child need? The pamphlet clearly addresses the parents as consumers acting on behalf of their children.

Eric Document Reproduction Service, 7420 Fullerton Road, Suite 110, Springfield, VA 22153-2852; (800) 443-3742. (1987, Eric Document No. ED 293 644, 13 pp.; $3.20 paper copy, $2.79 microfiche, plus postage and handling)

Parcel, Toby L.; Menaghan, Elizabeth G.

The effects of parental working conditions in the first year of life on the PPVT-R among 3–6 year olds: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth (NLSY)

Using data from the 1986 Child Supplement to the NLSY, the authors examined the effects of maternal and paternal employment conditions, child care arrangements, and family structure at two points—at infancy and at the preschool administration of the PPVT-R (the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised, a picture recognition test of expressive language) at age 3, 4, or 5 years. The sample included 795 children. The authors hypothesize that the conditions a child experiences, in terms of parental employment and out-of-home care near the time of the PPVT-R assessment as well as in infancy, affect their verbal test scores. The child's home environment was also considered (i.e., score on the HOME).

Although the NLSY data permit analysis by type of care, this study distinguishes only whether the child was in out-of-home care during infancy and during 1986. The authors report that parental working conditions and aspects of family structure were more important predictors of the child's verbal facility than child care arrangements either in infancy or in 1986. Children whose mothers worked between part-time and full-time in 1986 and whose mothers earned higher hourly wages scored the best, followed by those with full-time or only part-time working mothers, and finally by those whose mothers worked overtime regularly. Children performed better whose fathers worked full-time but not overtime and whose mothers did not work during their infancy. Children who had older siblings did worse. Being in out-of-home child care at either point had no effect.

This look at the NLSY data, taking into account the father's employment conditions and not differentiating between types of child care, produced somewhat different conclusions than the Baydar and Brooks-Gunn analysis (cited above), which differentiated child care by type and by stages of infancy, but did not include father's employment as a factor. Both reports concluded that having a nonworking mother during infancy appears to be a positive factor for child development. Their conclusions differed about the effects of out-of-home care and maternal employment.

Ohio State University, Department of Sociology, 300 Brickner Hall, Columbus, OH 43210-1353; (614) 292-6681. Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development. (1991, 40 pp.; revised version in preparation)

Parish, William L.; Hao, Lingxin; Hogan, Dennis P.

Family support networks, welfare and work among young mothers

The data for this study were drawn from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY): 1,787 mothers representative of the 1984 U.S. population of black and white (non-Hispanic) mothers aged 19–26 living with at least one child. Of the working mothers, 24 percent used the child's grandmother for child care; 20 percent their own spouse/partner; 12 percent another relative; and 38 percent nonrelatives. Black mothers were significantly more likely than white mothers to have had relative-provided child care. Half of the relative-provided child care was free; 10 percent involved compensation other than cash, such as barter or in-kind payments.

The author quotes theorists who hypothesize that families with nearby relatives (especially nonworking female relatives) lower the cost of child care and thus promote labor force participation by young mothers. According to these data, this is not so. The presence of a nonworking relative in the same household depressed employment, and the presence of female relatives in the neighborhood had no effect. Whether these young women ever began work was determined primarily by the presence of other working adults in the household (especially a

mother, father, spouse, or partner). Employment was promoted by the encouragement of work or a culture of employment—not by the presence of nonworking relatives: "For both blacks and whites, long-term economic security through early job experience is promoted,not by (kinship) help with child care costs but through linkages with the job market."

Relative care works best when child care is needed for a few hours, but not on a regular basis. The authors' data (not reported here) support the theory that as hours of needed care increase, the mother moves from free to paid care and from relative to nonrelative care.

Journal of Marriage and the Family, February, 1991, 53 (1): 203–215

Pence, Alan R.; Goelman, Hillel

Silent partners: Parents of children in three types of day care

This article condenses the authors' original 1985 report on the Victoria Day Care Research Project published by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. In the project equal numbers of mothers in one- and two-parent families using child care centers, or licensed or unlicensed family day care, were questioned. The study examined parents' perceptions, attitudes, search and selection strategies, and satisfaction with child care, and their attitudes about employment and about working mothers. Some of the one-parent families may have had low incomes, but the data were not analyzed by family income.

Preferences. Preference questions were asked in both a hypothetical and an actual care arrangement format. Users of each form of care responded similarly to the hypothetical and actual questions posed. The proportion of mothers who preferred the care they had chosen was greatest among center users (83 percent) and least among users of unlicensed family day care (61 percent). Their reasons for choosing certain types of care were different. Center users wanted "intellectual stimulation" and "same-age peers," and they were influenced by the "program being offered." Family day care users wanted "a home-like caring atmosphere" and were influenced by "caregiver characteristics." Logistical considerations were important for about one-third of each group; children placed in unlicensed family day care were much closer to home than children in other arrangements.

Search and selection. Among all child care users, by far the most common search strategy was to "talk to a friend" (nearly 75 percent), followed closely by to "contact a government agency." Relatives, neighbors, and all other sources (e.g., ads, bulletin boards) were used much less often (30 percent or less). Mothers using family day care reported having much closer personal relationships with the provider (i.e., speaking with the caregiver often) than did center users (80 percent vs. 50 percent). Significantly more family day care users than center users expected to keep in touch with the caregiver in the future (90 percent vs. 30 percent).

Attitudes. While no differences were found on perceived positive child outcomes of the day care experience, the groups differed on the negative outcomes they perceived. Family day care users were concerned about their child's emotional well-being as well as their own sense of guilt, while center users were concerned about negative influences from peers. All mothers were generally positive about working, with center users more positive than others.

This study suggests that groups of child care users are defined less by socioeconomic factors than by care-giving philosophies and values. Child age influences choice, with centers preferred for older children. There is no one best form of child care, but parents can be helped to make the best fit possible given their children's needs, their own needs, and the locally available options.

Early Childhood Research Quarterly, June, 1987, 2 (2): 103–118; or, Eric Document Reproduction Service, 7420 Fullerton Road, Suite 110, Springfield, VA 22153-2852; (800) 443-3742. (1985, Eric Document No. ED 276 524, 68 pp.; $9.60 plus postage and handling)

Porter, Toni

Just like any parent: The child care choices of welfare mothers in New Jersey

This report presents the findings from five focus group discussions on child care conducted with 58 welfare mothers participating in New Jersey's JOBS program—REACH. One-quarter of the mothers were under 21; the others ranged in age from their early 20s to 30s. More than half were black, the rest Hispanic. The report covers the mothers' search for child care, selection options, satisfaction with present care, and views on "ideal" child care. Direct quotes from mothers illustrate and underscore the study findings.

Search. These mothers had access to R&Rs, but most did not use R&Rs for child care arrangements; many who did reported less than helpful experiences.

Use. In contrast to national statistics, this group of low-income mothers did not rely on relatives—

except for the teenage mothers, three-quarters of whom used relatives. The vast majority of older mothers used child care centers. Very few of either group used family day care (i.e., only two teenage mothers and five older mothers). The explanation for such a high use of centers appears to be a combination of lack of available relatives, distrust of family day care providers (e.g., security concerns such as "who else" might be in and out of the home), a belief that centers do more "teaching numbers and letters," and the specific characteristics of the local child care supply available to these mothers (i.e., centers located in low-income neighborhoods).

Satisfaction. Teenage mothers were much more satisfied with their child care than older mothers, but overall this entire group reported great dissatisfaction with their options (largely no other choice than the care they used), with the quality of their present care, and with care they had used in the past. Mothers viewed center care as good because of learning opportunities and the possibility that a number of different adults would relate to their children, but they also reported that centers often seemed to be unsafe and to provide indifferent or neglectful care. Family day care providers were seen as offering good care when "the whole family" was involved, meaning when two generations lived at home and were available to the children. More often, family day care was perceived as offering nothing to do but watch television in a home not set up for kids (e.g., too many breakable things or no toys or place to play). Teenage mothers saw relatives as very satisfactory, but other mothers who had used them in the past viewed them as undependable, meddlesome, and "only in it for the money."

"Ideal" child care. These mothers defined ideal child care as a clean, safe place with lots to do indoors and out—and enough adults for both good supervision and individual attention. They defined ideal caregivers as middle-aged women who are experienced, dedicated, and patient, and who understand children. The best form of care for babies is to be at home with the mother, or failing that, to be with a relative. Good centers are the first choice for toddlers and preschoolers. These mothers believed that child care should be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and when children are sick. This reflected the realities of their work situations.

Bank Street College of Education, Division of Continuing Education, 610 W. 112th Street, New York, NY 10025 ; (212) 875-4478, Attention: Toni Porter. (December 1991, 34 pp.; $5.00 including postage and handling)

Porter, Toni

No choice but home: Child care and welfare reform

This study of child care use by AFDC mothers participating in New York's CEOSC (Comprehensive Employment Opportunity Support Center) programs found that the mother's use of child care was affected both by the available local supply of child care and by the presence and scope of child care counseling offered to her. Mothers in programs that emphasized child care counseling used a wider variety of forms of care, while those in programs that did not offer counseling tended to rely on home-based care. In one site, where there was both ample supply of care (e.g., an infant care center with a good reputation located near the CEOSC site) and an emphasis on counseling, nearly one-third of the age-eligible children were enrolled in the center.

Overall, 86 percent of the mothers reported having selected their preferred form of care. However, the mothers in CEOSC programs that emphasized child care counseling were more likely to be dissatisfied with the care they were using and ultimately to change it, perhaps because they had higher expectations. As in other studies, mothers who changed their child care arrangement overwhelmingly changed from home-based care to centers.

Child Care, Inc., 275 Seventh Avenue, 25th floor, New York, NY 10001; (212) 929-7604. (1990, 73 pp.; $15.00 including postage and handling)

Powell, Douglas R.; Eisenstadt, Jeanne Watson

Parents' searches for child care and the design of information services

This article was based on interviews in 50 Detroit households in which parents used full-time non-relative child care for a child under age six. The study examined how parents went about searching for child care—from the parent/consumer perspective. The sample of parents was 72 percent black, 24 percent white, and 4 percent other ethnic groups, with 60 percent two-parent families. Nearly a third had family incomes below $10,000.

Informal sources of information were by far the most common sources used to find child care. The pattern commonly followed was to first turn to nuclear family members and then to confidantes (i.e., people the parent talks to every day about the child or other personal issues), and close advisors (i.e., people the parent turns to for advice about child-rearing). Generally, these sources were only moderately helpful. Only one contact in four was able to give information that contributed to the final

decision about a child care arrangement. The next circle of sources included other relatives, long-term friends and co-workers, and finally neighbors. Long-term friends were more effective than family members, two out of five gave useful information.

Only after informal sources of information were tried did parents turn to formal sources. The most effective of these formal resources were the local neighborhood newspaper (probably to find advertisements for family child care) and "driving around" (presumably to spot day care centers). These activities were both very effective, yielding useful information 75 percent of the time. Other formal sources, such as bulletin boards and the telephone book, were consulted later and were much less effective (10 percent). Finally, while parents knew of the existence of community agencies and community people who might have child care information (such as R&Rs), they did not consult them. The only agency consulted by any parents was the city social service office, which proved to be fairly effective (56 percent), although it was one of the last resources consulted.

The various sources differed in effectiveness, and no one source appeared to be outstanding for a large proportion of these parents. This study suggests that parents perceive child care to be a private family matter; they turn to formal organizations as a last resort.

Children and Youth Services Review, 1982, 4 (3): 239–253

Rubin, Lillian B.

Worlds of pain: Life in the working-class family

This book, published in 1976, is a thorough and perceptive description of working class family life in the 1970s in America. It is based on extensive interviews with the husbands and wives in fifty white, two-parent, working class families with children. It is summarized here because of the insight it offers into working-class parents' views on childrearing and use of child care arrangements.

Working class parents rarely send their children to nursery school, and when the mother works families do not tend to use formal child care programs. The reasons are not primarily financial, but cultural. Children "must be watched" closely, both to keep them "out of trouble" and to protect them from alien values. The words of one young mother conveyed this attitude precisely: "I don't want my kids brought up by strangers. This way it's just right. My mother-in-law comes here and stays with them and it's family. We don't have to worry about what kind of stuff some stranger is teaching them. We know they're learning right from wrong. I'd be afraid to leave them in a school or someplace like that. I'd worry that they'd get too far away from the family."

Although this attitude may have shifted somewhat over the last fifteen years, Zinsser's 1990 study (see below) of child care in a white working-class community confirmed the same cultural values.

Harper Collins, P. O. Box 588, Scranton, PA 18512; (800) 331-3761. (1976, 268 pp.; $14.00 plus local tax and $2.75 postage and handling)

Shinn, Marybeth; Galinsky, Ellen; Gulcur, Leyla

The role of child care centers in the lives of parents

These authors collected information in telephone interviews with 441 mothers who were using 46 child care centers in Atlanta, Georgia, in order to assess the impact of child care on parents. Satisfaction with child care, feelings about having a child in care, the mother's health and well-being, work-family conflicts, and work behaviors were examined in relation to features of child care and mothers' jobs. The mothers in the study were 28 percent black, but mainly white (70 percent); relatively wealthy ($40,000–50,000 average family income); well-educated (median level: associate's degree or some college); and employed (95 percent). Their children ranged in age from infants through four-year-olds, with approximately equal numbers in each one-year age span.

Child care. Even though the quality of the child care centers was appraised as low (see the next bibliographical entry), overall satisfaction with them was high (averaging 4.5 on a 5.0 scale), with 80 percent of mothers reporting that they would send their child to the same center again. The mother's satisfaction with child care was determined from her ratings on an inventory of child care features: the child's experience (e.g., teacher's warmth, opportunities for learning, day-to-day activities); staff/child ratio and group size; facility (e.g., amount of space, safety and security); staff stability; parental interactions with the teacher (e.g., shared ideas with, or felt criticized by); and adult needs (e.g., cost, location relative to home and work, flexibility of hours, rules, and policies, and opportunities for parents to influence decisions). Of these features the most important predictor of the mother's overall satisfaction with the child care center was her satisfaction with the child's experience. The facility's attributes, staff turnover, and negative interactions with teachers (even low levels) also contributed. Adult needs made no contribution to overall satisfaction with care. The authors conclude that the parents cared about the developmental

aspects of child care, but they perceived them globally and independently from features thought to meet adult needs.

Mothers' jobs. The features of the mothers' jobs were divided into job demands (e.g., speed, difficulty, amount of work, time to get work done), job autonomy, and supervisor sensitivity to the mother as a worker and as a parent. Stress, job-related health symptoms (e.g., headaches, trouble sleeping), conflict between work and family responsibilities, and spillover of work life into family life were also measured (e.g., not having patience or energy for children because of one's job). Job factors were related to the mother's well-being and to the conflict between work and family responsibilities, but these factors were not related to feelings about child care.

The researchers found that higher income, not overall satisfaction with child care, was associated with more positive feelings about having a child in care. Perceptions that child care was beneficial to the child were very high (averaging 4.1 on a 5.0 scale). Satisfaction with how the center met adult needs was associated with lower perceived stress, fewer job-related health problems, and less spillover of work concerns into family life.

Child care played two distinct roles for these parents—as a good experience for their children and as a support for their own well-being as workers. The features of child care that made it good for children were distinct from features that supported the mother's well-being as a worker. This study did not examine search and selection behavior, but it is likely that the consumer decisions took these two sets of features into account.

New York University, Department of Community Psychology, 6 Washington Place, Room 275, New York, NY 10003; (212) 998-7860. (1989, 34 pp.; free)

Shinn, Marybeth; Phillips, Deborah; Howes, Carollee; Galinsky, Ellen; Whitebook, Marcy

Correspondence between mothers' perceptions and observer ratings of quality in child care centers

This study compared observer's ratings of 46 child care centers in Atlanta with the feelings and satisfaction of 441 mothers (drawn from the study cited above) whose children were enrolled in these centers. Evaluators rated the centers using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) and the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS). Mothers reported high levels of satisfaction with care that was of relatively low quality in terms of group size, ratio, and teacher training.

Mothers' perceptions of the quality of the center they used and of the teachers' interactions with children corresponded closely with observer ratings. Mothers' overall satisfaction was lower when teachers were rated as more detached or insensitive. When the overall score for infant-toddler rooms was poor, and when teachers were seen to be detached, insensitive, and chaotic, the mothers felt lonely and missed their child. Teacher turnover was the single variable most closely associated with quality as viewed by mothers. Mothers' satisfaction was strongly associated with directors' reports of teacher turnover rates. Higher turnover rates predicted less satisfaction.

Mothers perceived the overall quality of a child care center and the quality of teacher-child interactions to be important, but they gave less weight to structural dimensions such as group size, ratio, and teacher training—which generally influence overall quality but do not guarantee it. Structural dimensions of child care settings are regulatable, however, while overall quality is not. The authors argue that parent education efforts ought to clarify the links between structural dimensions and overall quality so that consumers can look for those aspects as well. They also suggest that consumers' demands for overall quality be translated into terms used by regulators and the policymaking community—so they will be considered.

New York University, Department of Community Psychology, 6 Washington Place, Room 275, New York, NY 10003; (212) 998-7860. (1990, 31 pp.; free)

Sonenstein, Freya L.

The child care preferences of parents with young children: How little is known

In Janet Shibley Hyde and Marilyn J. Essex (Eds.), *Parental leave and child care: Setting a research and policy agenda*

This chapter addresses issues that are key to understanding child care use and preferences of low-income mothers. It includes a thorough but brief literature review and then focuses on a study of child care preferences and use among a random sample of 554 mothers with children under ten receiving AFDC in three cities (Boston, Denver, and Charlotte) in 1983–1984. Data on 204 of these mothers who had children under age three are discussed. The percentages of mothers using various child care arrangements were similar to those found in other studies of low-income mothers (i.e., 68 percent using relatives; 16 percent using nonrelatives; and 16 percent using centers). The author notes that 64 percent of these mothers were not using their first choice arrangement.

Temple University Press, Broad and Oxford Streets, Room 305, Philadelphia, PA 19122; (800) 447-1656. (1991, pp. 337–353; book is $49.95 plus $3.50 postage and handling; 20% discount if this bibliography is mentioned)

Sonenstein, Freya L.; Wolf, Douglas A.

Satisfaction with child care: Perspectives of welfare mothers

The article concerns a study of child care preferences and use by a random sample of 382 mothers with children under six receiving AFDC in three cities (Boston, Denver, and Charlotte) in 1983–1984. (Also see the entry above.) Quality, convenience, cost, and satisfaction were examined across a range of child care types (i.e., relatives in home; relatives out of home; unrelated family day care; unrelated sitters; and centers).

Quality. Mothers rated group care in centers best on the item "caregivers having specialized training" and worst on "child:adult ratios." The ratios for centers were 5:1, which is very good in an absolute sense but compares poorly with the ratios of 3:1 found in nonrelative family day care and 2:1 in relative care. The various types of care were rated significantly differently on dimensions of quality assessed by the mothers: group care provided the "most frequent opportunities to learn new things;" care by sitters in the home was inferior to all other types on "discipline" and "safety." Care by relatives was superior in terms of "how children felt about caregiver" and "how happy children were with the care arrangement." However, these ratings were not confirmed by observers; they reflect the mother's report or her opinion.

Convenience and dependability. In-home care was rated as the most convenient, with family day care and out-of-home relative care the least convenient. Children were in center care for the greatest number of hours per week (27 hours), with family day care next (24 hours). Many users of all types of care, except centers, needed care outside regular daily hours (28 percent for in-home relatives; 40 percent for children in other noncenter care; and 6 percent in centers). It seems logical that those who need irregular hours during the week are less likely to select centers in the first place; therefore center users are less likely to need irregular hours.

Mothers using centers reported more work days lost due to a child's illness (6 days) than users of other types of care (1 day over an 8-month period). No differences were found among types of child care for work days lost because the arrangement was unavailable.

Cost. The authors note that two-thirds of the mothers in the sample did not pay for care and that 18 percent of the mothers who used relatives did pay. The other reported cost information is less useful because it does not account for the subsidies likely to be used by many of these mothers. The study included only the direct cash payment from the mother herself (which is likely to include mothers paying a small fee on a sliding scale as well as those who pay the whole cost and are reimbursed).

Satisfaction. These mothers, who were receiving AFDC, were decidedly less satisfied with child care than are parents in nationally representative samples. Of these welfare mothers, 51 percent reported being completely satisfied, and 19 percent somewhat satisfied, versus 90–96 percent of all parents who typically report being very satisfied or satisfied. Only 28 percent of the welfare mothers were using a first choice arrangement. Welfare mothers using centers had the highest satisfaction levels and were most likely to be using a first choice arrangement; 52 percent of these mothers said that centers were their first choice.

Dimensions of care that appear to be important to mothers receiving AFDC. Mothers with children under three differed from those with children aged 3–5. Mothers of younger children were more satisfied if the child care location was convenient and if the staff/child ratios were low. (This is sensible given the need to carry babies and their accoutrements back and forth and given the greater vulnerability of younger children.) Mothers of preschoolers were more satisfied when they thought their child was happy about the care and was learning new things. No significant differences were found between the type of care and the satisfaction level except for a weak association between dissatisfaction and in-home relative care for younger children.

Specific dimensions of care, not the type of care, seemed to be important to these welfare mothers. The key dimensions that emerged were: convenient hours and location, low staff/child ratios, the child's happiness, learning opportunities, and good adult supervision. These are sensible factors and they match characteristics known to be related to better developmental outcomes for children. If a public policy goal is for welfare mothers to be satisfied with their child care (because satisfaction with child care should support satisfaction with employment), then the results of this study argue for improving all forms of child care in these directions, not expanding one form of care over another.

Journal of Social Issues, 1991, 47 (2): 15–31

Thomas, Melissa L.; Makris, Barbara L.

Child care consumer education: A curriculum for working parents

This is the only curriculum on child care consumer education listed in the ERIC database. It is basic and straightforward, covering types of care, ways to locate care, selection criteria, initial screening, visits and ongoing relations with the provider. It defines good care as good for the child (in terms of health and safety and developmentally) and for the parent—creating 'peace of mind' for the parent. The Federal Interagency Day Care Regulations (FIDCR), proposed in the late 1970s as national child care standards, are used as a guide to evaluating quality.

Eric Document Reproduction Service, 7420 Fullerton Road, Suite 110, Springfield, VA 22153-2852; (800) 443-3742. (1983, Eric Document No. ED 248 951, 22 pp.; $1.16 microfiche only, plus postage and handling)

Virginia State Department of Education

About the preschool years: Educational opportunities in Virginia

This is an example of a consumer education booklet prepared by a state department of education (as is the New York State published guide cited above). The booklet is the first of a five-part series on children from infancy through high school. It covers child development, child-rearing, programs of various types, and the process of entry into public school. Child care appears separately from preschool education in the program descriptions, but a single checklist is offered for parents to use when selecting any type of preschool program. The information on child development is accurate and extensive, although the guide is long and takes a narrow perspective on programs. The process of selecting a child's program is described as a matter of evaluating certain program attributes (e.g., activities, equipment, facilities, health, and safety) and excludes any adult needs, such as hours, cost, or convenience.

Eric Document Reproduction Service, 7420 Fullerton Road, Suite 110, Springfield, VA 22153-2852; (800) 443-3742; or, Virginia Department of Education, Public Information Office, P. O. Box 6Q, Richmond, VA 23216; (804) 225-2020. (1986, Eric Document No. ED 290 559, 102 pp.; $16.00)

Willer, Barbara; Hofferth, Sandra L.; Kisker, Ellen Eliason; Divine-Hawkins, Patricia; Farquhar, Elizabeth; Glantz, Frederic B.

The demand and supply of child care in 1990: Joint findings from "The National Child Care Survey 1990" and "A Profile of Child Care Settings"

This report summarizes the joint findings from the National Child Care Survey 1990 and A Profile of Child Care Settings. These studies consider all types of families (e.g., with and without employed mothers) with children under age 13, and all types of settings serving children under six.

The child care program supply has increased substantially since 1970—with a three-fold increase in centers since 1976. Use of care is reported by age of child, mother's employment status, type of care and hours in care. The rates of child care use by mothers who do not work are about half of those for mothers who do. For both groups, there is a strong shift toward the use of centers when the children reach age three.

The majority of parents found their child care arrangement through friends, neighbors or relatives; 10 percent found care through an R&R. Sixty percent of parents said that quality was the most important consideration in choosing their current arrangement. The most frequently cited aspect of quality was a "warm and loving staff/provider." Availability, location, or hours were the most important aspect for about a quarter of the families, and cost was most important for about 10 percent.

National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20009-5786; (800) 424-2460. (1991, NAEYC Publication No. 136, 60 pp.; $5.00 plus postage and handling)

Wolf, Douglas; Sonenstein, Freya

Preferences, perceptions and child care turnover: Patterns among welfare mothers

This article includes statistics from the study (cited earlier under Sonenstein) of AFDC mothers in three cities (Denver, Boston and Charlotte). It covers the child care arrangements made by parents who were involved in school or work, or who were looking for work during the period from September 1983 through April 1984. The article focuses on the entry into or exit from a child care arrangement.

Transitions from one form of care to another. About one-third of the 80 exits from a child care setting recorded were to a situation in which care was not needed. Of transitions into another form of care, the most likely transition was into center care, with 36–54 percent of those who changed moving into center care. From 15–30 percent of the transitions were into relative care; and only 3–11 percent of the transitions were into nonrelative care—a proxy for family day care in this study.

Satisfaction. Not surprisingly, the child care arrangements viewed as more satisfactory were also likely

to be more stable and long-lived. Convenience (in location and hours) was the satisfaction factor that most reduced the likelihood of exit from care. Family day care seemed the least stable arrangement.

Cost. About half of the users of child care did not pay for it; (this includes those who had fully subsidized center care). The average reported cost per hour for care was only 31 cents, probably because nonpayers were included in the average. The higher the out-of-pocket cost of care, regardless of type, the more likely it was to end. Thus, child care arrangements are more stable when they cost less or when they are cheaper relative to family income.

Informed consumers. Among AFDC mothers not using child care yet, mothers who believed that the kind of child care they preferred would be hard to obtain, and those who preferred center care, were more likely to begin using child care than other AFDC mothers. The authors suggest that mothers with these preferences and perceptions may be better informed about the child care market or may be previously experienced. Mothers less informed about AFDC were less likely to begin child care. Uninformed meant answering "no" or "don't know" to: "(1) Can you earn money and still get AFDC? (2) Can AFDC mothers get help paying for child care? and (3) If you work and get AFDC will the agency deduct child care expenses from what you earn before they re-figure your grant?"

The authors conclude that the work behavior of welfare mothers would be promoted by policies that enhance the women's knowledge concerning the range of available child care services and the range of programmatic options open to them through the welfare program.

The Urban Institute, Department C, Research Papers Sales Office, P. O. Box 7273, Washington, DC 20044; (202) 857-8687. (1990, 44 pp.; $8.00 including postage and handling)

Zinsser, Caroline

Over a barrel: Working mothers talk about child care

This ethnographic study of 28 working mothers with 46 children (collectively) between infancy and age 18, evenly divided between middle-class and working-class families, investigated how these mothers chose child care and what influenced their choices, and explored the relationship of their work to child care arrangements. The issues were explored via discussion groups.

The women in this study used a wide variety of child care arrangements that changed over time as their children aged, as the number of children in their family grew, and as their marital status and employment changed. These parents used a two-part classification system to describe child care arrangements: "baby-sitting" and "day care." Baby-sitting included relatives, friends, neighbors, and others in home settings (either the child's own home or another home). Day care meant children younger than school age were cared for by professionals in centers.

Use, selection, and reasons. Infants were cared for primarily by baby-sitters who were viewed as appropriate nurturers for these young children. As in other studies, the working-class mothers preferred relatives while middle-class women gravitated to non-relative sitters or centers. At around three years of age children were generally moved into group care for reasons of socialization, more learning, and the perceived stability and reliability of centers. Also, as other studies have shown, these parents relied on the advice of friends, family, and neighbors to find child care. Advice of trusted friends was also important in judging the quality of baby-sitters, along with visits to the sitter's home. The parents' overall reaction to the setting was important in their selection of centers. Positive reactions involved seeing the center as a site for "professionals doing early childhood education;" negative reactions involved feeling that the staff did not like children: "Parents spoke of instant reactions of 'gut feelings' and 'stomach turnings.' Choosing child care was an emotional process."

Licensing was not a factor when these mothers selected a child care arrangement. It was assumed that centers had licenses, and licensing was not viewed as making any difference with regard to choosing baby-sitters.

Work, family, and child care. The women in this study expressed some guilt and conflict about the demands of work and child-rearing, although the necessity and desirability of working and the related need for child care were accepted as normal. Some of the women had husbands or other men in their families who disapproved of their working; but most of them felt support for their work from the males in their families. Most women reported that their husbands shared child care duties much more in theory than in fact. Fitting child care schedules to work schedules was tricky for many, and dealing with a sick child or a child care breakdown was often mentioned as a problem. Problems with child care included the difficulty in finding it, its expense, transportation difficulties, not having enough time to do everything, and dissatisfaction with the quality of care—primarily concerning arrangements involving relatives and friends.

This report brings the experiences and words of parents into the public policy arena: "All working parents are specialists in child care. They devise their own systems and make their own connections, using or ignoring government policy as it suits their strategies to raise their children according to their own rules based on family traditions and values."

Photocopy available for $11.10 prepaid from: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University, 154 Haven Avenue, New York, NY 10032; (212) 927-8793. (1987, 61 pp.)

Zinsser, Caroline

Raised in East Urban: A community study of informal and unregulated child care

This book based on an ethnographic study, presents a picture of child care in an urban, white, working-class community in the northeast. These families have traditionally relied on relatives and trusted friends for child care, and they still attempt to do this. They turn to "strangers" or formal programs only as last resort. The women who provide child care do so as an extension of their traditional roles as mothers and housekeepers.

Child care use and preferences. In this community the traditional family with a male provider and a female homemaker is still the desired pattern, although economic necessity is forcing more and more mothers into the work force. When child care is needed, the caregiver of first choice is the grandmother (preferably the maternal grandmother); the second choice is a well-known neighbor. Child care by "strangers" is disapproved of; "strangers" include both unknown individuals and centers (called "day cares"). Centers are viewed as serving families on welfare, designed for poor minority children, and as not acceptable for the children of the parents interviewed in the study. Interestingly, these parents view Head Start as an educational program acceptable for their children.

Work as a "baby-sitter." For women in this community, becoming a "baby-sitter" was compatible both with the strong value placed on women being at home and the need to earn some money. Some baby-sitters cared only for their grandchildren, but all of those interviewed also cared for "outside" children. The fees charged depended on the income of the family the sitter was working for. Sitters charged lower-income parents less and higher-income parents more, letting the higher-income parents decide when raises should be given. Baby-sitters saw themselves as "helping hands" and "people who loved children" rather than small business women. Most baby-sitters worked in their own homes, but some worked in the homes of the high-income parents—where they did housework, for which they were paid more per hour than they were paid for child care.

Baby-sitters did not see themselves as teachers or child-rearers, but as being responsible for children's health and safety. They valued cleanliness, the protection of children from accidents, getting the children outside into fresh air, and feeding them well. Zinsser notes perceptively that this focus minimizes any conflict that might exist between a middle-class mother's child-rearing views and a working-class baby-sitter's views. It also minimizes conflicts of authority between relatives.

In order to translate the lessons learned from the lives of these working-class families into public policy, Zinsser makes three broad recommendations:

1. Support quality child care of all types by trusting parent's judgment, recognizing the strengths of informal arrangements, and supporting informal care through sensible regulation and funding.
2. In communities where informal familial care has been the traditional choice but cannot support the growing demand for care, increase the supply of regulated family day care by recognizing that centers are not preferred by all, especially for younger children, by regulating home settings in a sensitive manner and by compensating providers fairly.
3. Upgrade and expand centers by encouraging within-center diversity in terms of family incomes, ethnicity, and race; by raising eligibility levels to ensure a wider range of income-eligible families in centers; by raising the qualification levels of center staff to early education standards so that centers will be clearly educational rather than welfare services; and by making centers more responsive to local community values.

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NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHILDREN IN POVERTY

Judith E. Jones, *Director*

The National Center for Children in Poverty was established in 1989 at the School of Public Health, Columbia University. Its goal is to strengthen programs and policies for young children and their families who live in poverty in the United States. The Center seeks to achieve this goal through interdisciplinary analysis and dissemination of information about public and private initiatives in the areas of early childhood care and education, maternal and child health, and the integration of services for young children and their families.